

# External Assessment of Nuclear Safety Culture: The Why and How

Ward Sproat  
Deputy Project Director-WTP  
Bechtel National, Inc.

# My Personal Significant Emotional Event

- ▶ **NRC Finds Operators Sleeping in the Control Room**
  - 2 Unit nuclear plant shutdown for almost 3 years
  - CEO/COO and other officers fired
  - Company within months of bankruptcy
- ▶ **Root cause: No nuclear safety culture**
  - Management ignored repeated outside warnings
  - Management was technically focused
  - Poor individual accountability was ignored
  - Performance expectations were low or non-existent

# How We Got Better

- ▶ Brought in new leadership from **outside** the company
- ▶ Defined the safety-oriented performance culture we wanted
- ▶ Set clear performance and behavioral expectations for managers/supervisors and individual contributors
- ▶ Established standing processes to monitor/measure and benchmark the culture shift
  - Surveys to benchmark and trend the culture shift
  - Outside review boards at each station
  - Special committee of the Board of Directors
- ▶ Sent our leaders to other places to learn from them
- ▶ Significant investment in supervisory training

# Selected Personal Learnings About Nuclear Safety Culture

- ▶ Technically-oriented management teams generally don't understand or pay attention to culture
- ▶ Management teams generally think things are going better in the workforce than they really are
  - They also think that people from the outside don't get their "unique" challenges
- ▶ Leaders need to manage the culture like the rest of the business/project: And they need to be taught how to do it
- ▶ There is somebody out there that has faced the same issues before: Use Them and Learn!

# WTP Is Applying These Lessons

- ▶ Two independent team-based assessments conducted in 2011
  - Resulted in a Comprehensive Corrective Action Plan focused on the culture
  - Six focus areas with recommended DOE integration
- ▶ Outside OD consultant working with management team
- ▶ External NSQC review panel being emplaced
- ▶ Formal process for managing and monitoring the culture and implementing annually updated plans being put in place